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## **Guardsmen form lasting friendship in Iraq**

By Sgt. Samuel Curameng  
Charlie Co., 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 185<sup>th</sup> Armor

COB SPEICHER, Iraq — Pfc. Christopher Rivera-Flores, from Torrance, Calif., and Pfc. Omar Vega-Flores, from San Diego, Calif., are not related, but they have become brothers.

The two Soldiers of 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Charlie Co., 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 185<sup>th</sup> Armor, California Army National Guard, have come to be called “the twins” by others in the platoon.

They are both tall and slim, have black hair, and sport a constant smile with a positive attitude.

It is often said that you cannot ask one to throw a rock without the other being too far from where it lands. The twins are always together whether it is time to do some repairs on vehicles, or time for a basketball game at the gym. They play video games together and by now share the same music collection.

When asked if they considered themselves brothers, they both immediately replied, “Yeah, of course!”

“Having a ‘brother’ like him helps a lot,” said Rivera. “During difficult times I can go to him and he’ll make me laugh.”

Vega expressed the same sentiment.

Usually, friendships like this last for a lifetime. Upon return to California, both Soldiers are planning on being in the same unit so they both can drill together.

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“My perspective is that warriors have always relied on each other, and that out of this reliance comes a deep personal commitment,” said Chaplain (Capt.) Jesse Vega, chaplain, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn., 185<sup>th</sup> AR. “The main example of this in the Bible is the friendship that developed between Jonathan and David in 1 Samuel.”

The chaplain also used an example from literature.

“And many centuries later Shakespeare also wrote about the bond between Soldiers,” said Capt. Vega. “In the Saint Crispin's Day speech from Henry V, the king says ‘We few, we happy few, we band of brothers; for he today that sheds his blood with me shall be my brother.’ So relying on our ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’ to get through deployment is an age-old tradition and I would encourage it as a healthy part of our warrior culture.”

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